

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Official Action dated December 27, 2005, claims 1, 9, 12-13 and 17-20 are amended and claims 4-8 and 11 are canceled. Claims 1-3, 9, 10 and 12-22 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 1-3, 9, 10, 12, 19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner maintains that the recitation “said significant overlap region is a region where a great number of said divided images overlap with each other” is indefinite since the word “great” is a relative term not defined by the claims.

Although claim 17 is not included in the rejection, it is presumed that the Examiner intended to include claim 17 in the rejection as it has the same recitation.

To expedite prosecution, the noted recitation is amended to delineate “said significant overlap region is a region where *the largest* number of said divided images overlap with each other”. A person of ordinary skill in the art would be able to determine the metes and bounds of the amended claims as the region that has the largest number of divided images that overlap with each other (which is determinable) would be delineated the significant overlap region. Thus, amended independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 19 recite the invention with the degree of precision and particularity required by the statute. Therefore, it is respectfully urged that the rejection of claims 1-3, 9, 10, 12, 19 and 21, as being indefinite, be withdrawn.

As claims 1-3, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19 and 21 are not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or 35 U.S.C. § 103, it is believed that claims 1-3, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19 and 21, as amended, are allowable.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13-16, 18, 20 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cullen (USPN 6,038,349) in view of Katayama et al. (USPN 6,424,752).

To expedite prosecution, claim 13 is amended to depend from amended independent claim 9, claim 18 is amended to depend from amended independent claim 17, and claim 20 is amended to depend from amended independent claim 1. As amended independent claims 9, 17 and 1 are not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or 35 U.S.C. § 103, it is believed that amended claims 13, 18 and 20 are allowable, as are claims 14-16 and 22 depending from amended claim 13.

CONCLUSION

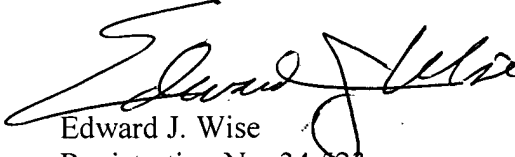
Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Application No.: 09/774,709

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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